

Message for International Education Week 2010

Connect To Learn

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As a global initiative dedicated to improving education for girls in developing countries, we at Connect To Learn applaud the efforts by Secretary of Education Arne Duncan and Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton on their partnership promoting the importance of international education during the 11th Annual International Education Week (IEW), November 15 -19, 2010.

The theme for this year's IEW, "International Education: Striving for a Sustainable Future," is particularly relevant to our organization's mission. Connect To Learn launched earlier this year with an innovative partnership led by Earth Institute, Ericsson, and Millennium Promise—along with global spokeswoman Madonna. We believe that education is an important element to eliminating poverty and creating a sustainable future.

With a special focus on girls, Connect To Learn provides scholarships for students in developing countries to attend secondary school, and implements mobile broadband technology in their classrooms to connect them to a 21st century education. With the strategic use of information and communications technology (ICT), we are striving to help bridge the learning gaps for students across the world, so that a child in Ghana, Tanzania, Nepal or Cambodia can have access to the same educational resources as a child—and her teachers—as in Manhattan.

Programs such as our *School To School Connections* program—which links students and teachers from classrooms in the developing world to counterparts in the US and other developed countries—help children learn first hand about our interdependent world, and support international understanding and cultural awareness. We believe that a 21st century education for all includes building the skills required to communicate and cooperate with those from nations and cultures vastly different from their own through international exchange from an early age.

Connect To Learn is focused particularly on secondary education for girls based on powerful evidence of the positive change girls and women can bring to their communities when they have access to education. When a girl in a poor village gets a good education, she is better able to protect her health, make a better living and raise a healthy family—improving her life and the lives of the people around her.

But millions of girls around the world—particularly in poor, rural areas—face extraordinary challenges completing primary school, and barriers to graduating secondary school that are often insurmountable. With only a basic education, if that—and no connection to the outside world—most village girls miss out on the opportunity to reach their full potential, improve the lives of their families and communities, and contribute to their nation's economy.

International Education Week provides an important platform for these issues, and we at Connect To Learn fully support the efforts of Secretary Clinton and Secretary Duncan, and hope for great success for the 2010 International Education Week.